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UNCLAS MUSCAT 001043

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: THE OIC, CONCERTS, AND LABOR LAWS

A (Permanent) Seat At The Table

[11](#). The privately owned Arabic-language daily "Al-Watan" published an editorial on June 29 entitled "Marginalization Is The Cause Of Misunderstandings":

"The recently concluded meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Yemen was a useful forum to address common interests and concerns, and the participation of the Sultanate of Oman shows our eagerness to contribute to a unified vision among our sister countries. This vision respects the interests of other countries - despite the fact that many international observers now paint all Islamic countries with the same brush of terrorism. Arabs and Muslims need to resist this type of marginalization. One possible solution would be to grant a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council to an Islamic country. The OIC meeting focused on this point."

Protest Song

[12](#). "Al-Watan" also carried an editorial on July 3 under the headline "Music Concerts Don't Feed the Hungry":

"The world faces many man-made catastrophes: poverty, the imbalance of trade, the launching of illegitimate wars, a flourishing weapons trade, and environmental pollution. These issues are not going to be solved by singing and dancing. The "Live 8" concert will not be the solution for the world's pain and suffering. We call again upon the leaders of wealthy nations to make courageous decisions to alleviate global problems. If the debts of all poor countries were cancelled, it would be better for the development of the so-called Third World."

Belaboring The Point

[13](#). The July 4 edition of "Al-Watan" featured an editorial entitled "Adhering To Legitimacy Is The Omani Way":

"The concept of labor must be understood as a contract between two parties: the employer and the employee. This type of contract exists in every economic sector, in both the public and private spheres. As long as the two parties agree on the contract, both should abide by the laws and conditions of the contract.... Likewise, member states of the United Nations have committed themselves to an international labor law; forcing people to work against their will is a type of human slavery that is forbidden by all international agreements. The UN also prohibits employing underage children. Oman has always adhered to international labor laws, illustrating that obeying the law is part of our culture, and caring for vulnerable citizens is consistent with our values." (Note: Sultan Qaboos issued a royal decree on July 3 ratifying the International Labor Organization conventions dealing with forced labor and a minimum employment age. End note.)

BALTIMORE